"The Bonnie Brier Bush" is having a wonderful reception at the Theater. Last night the house was again packed, the receipts running far in excess of those of the opening night. Everything about the beautiful delineation was applauded more vociferously than before and the immense reception tendered Mr. Stoddart and the favorite singer Mr. Easton, was not less pronounced than on the first night. The playing of Mr. Stoddart is one of the strongest and most touching instances of fine acting that will be afforded for many seasons to come, and no one should miss the opportunity to see it. The engagement closes this afternoon and evening.

After last night's performance Mr. Stoddart and most of the members of his company accepted an invitation from Mrs. R. C. Easton to assemble at her home, nearly opposite the Theater. An hour or two was spent in social conversation and discussing refreshments, the players being introduced by Mr. and Mrs. Easton to a number of their intimate friends.

* * *

Mr. Easton received a handsome tribute yesterday afternoon at the Tabernacle, when 600 or 700 people assembled in his honor. A rarely beautiful program was offered, Mr. Easton himself singing six or eight Scotch songs in his most charming style, and being handsomely applauded for each. One of the features of the afternoon was his duet from "The Bohemian Girl" with Miss Gates, a difficult number, which Mr. Easton had not sung since he appeared in the opera here with Mrs. Pugsley many years ago. Such old time favorites as "Bonnie Prince Charlie," "Annie Laurie," "Bonnie Doon," and others, rendered in the singer's most beautiful style, were specially applauded. His rendition of the "Linden Tree," accompanied by the Pyper, Whitney, Patrick, Spencer quartet, was recalled, although it was the closing number. After the concert Mr. Easton rendered "O my Father" by special request.

Other numbers on the program were "The Pearl of Brazil" by Miss Gates, and "O Ye Mountains High" for an encore. Prof. McClellan gave "The William Tell" overture on the organ, and was so vociferously applauded that he rendered "The Old Kentucky Home" for an encore. The choir sang one number, "The Spring Time," in excellent fashion. The receipts of the afternoon were divided between the choir and Mr. Easton.

At the conclusion of the recital Mr. Easton was surrounded by the members of "The Bonnie Brier Bush" company, who fairly swamped him with their congratulations, Mr. Stoddart specially saying that he never knew before what kind of a tenor he had in his company.

* * *

Miss Emma Lucy Gates, and her father and mother, all of whom were to have left for New York on Friday morning, deferred their departure till last night, in order that Miss Gates might sing at the Easton recital. Immediately after rendering her three numbers, Miss Gates jumped into a hack and was whirled to the R. G. W. depot. She met her father and mother at Provo, and the three took the train for New York last night. Miss Gates will stop over in Indianapolis Tuesday evening, where she will be the guest of Mrs. May Wright Sewall, at whose house a reception will be tendered her. On arriving in New York she will at once begin work under the distinguished teacher, Madam Ashforth.

* * *

Louis James and Frederick Warde have tried starring alone and starring together. In their individual capacities they have made successes which ranked from fair to good. As joint stars they have always been among the heaviest money makers traveling. This fact has brought them together again this year, under the management of that enterprising firm, Wagenhals & Kemper, and in Salt Lake Monday evening they open another engagement in Shakespeare's, "The Tempest," a play so rarely seen that it will amount to a positive novelty. The two actors are surrounded by a big company, and the whole production is said to be a fascinating spectacle, in which music, dancing, and scenic pictures are wedded to the entertaining verse of the immortal master. The big feature, however, after the two stars, will be the scenery and the mechanical arrangements, which are said to be the most startling of anything produced in recent years.

* * *

The scene which puts the ingenuity of Managers Wegenhals and Kemper to the greatest test is the stage picture of the storm and shipwreck which occurs at the opening of the play. Every known device has been used to make this scene realistic, and at the same time to maintain an atmosphere of the supernatural. A multiplicity of gauzes is used to effect the gradual change from darkness to dawn, the most intricate color scheme has been evolved, that hues of sunshine and shade in forest dell, and ocean wave, may assume their actual shades of color; musical and other instruments of tone were made to mimic the sounds heard in the woods, the roar of the waters and swish of the winds. Costumes were made to form the most artistic contrasts both in color and design so as to keep the fairies and elves and goblins of the enchanted island a separate and distinct creation from that of the worldly courtiers and rough sailors who make it their temporary home. In fact every one concerned in the production from the man who makes the imitation flowers, toads and birds of the forest, the carpenters, scenic painters, musical composers, every one up to the actors who speak the lines, each and all were instructed to study well the lines of the play itself for their inspiration. The general effect of the spectacular scenes will be enhanced by the assistance of a competent ballet and a well trained chorus.

* * *

Bob Fitzsimmons, the famous heavy weight, has abandoned the ring and taken up with the theater. A play has been written for him entitled "The Honest Blacksmith," and a novelty is introduced in the shape of a smithy in which the redoutable Bob makes a horse shoe and shoes a horse. Needless to say the playwright finds means to introduce a pugilistic scene in which Bob and his partner spar four rounds. Included in the company is his wife, and their son Robert Fitzsimmons, Jr. The engagement opens at the Grand Monday night.

* * *

The latter part of next week the Grand anounces "Down the Mobile," another of Lincoln J. Carter's up to date offerings. It is announced as a romantic comedy drama of southern life and the two special features on which Mr. Carter relies for his sensation are a reproduction of the "Dismal Swamp," and the burning of an old cotton mill. "Down the Mobile" will run three nights and a Saturday matinee.

THEATER GOSSIP.

Joseph Jefferson began his 43rd season in Boston lately and is as well and hearty as ever.

Kyrle Bellew had a big opening in Newark in "A Gentleman of France." Eleanor Robson as the heroine.

The widow of Jack Haverly has lost her suit to enjoin W. Nankeville from using the name of Haverly Minstrels in connection with the show of this kind that he has on tour in the west.

At the opening of the Belasco Theater in New York, Charles Warner, the English actor, sat in a box. The orchestra played "My country 'tis of thee," which Mr. Warner supposed was "God save the King." He rose, and stood, and a few more rising, the whole house finally stood.

A dramatization of A. C. Gunter's "Mr. Barnes of New York" will be given by the Fifth Avenue Theater stock company next week, with Minnie Seligman and James Wilson in the principal roles. George Evans is the principal feature of the vaudeville.

Prof. L'Oiselle, the ballet master whose training of the dancing girls in "Corianton" has been so widely commented on, has returned to Salt Lake with the intention of settling down here. Prof. L'Oiselle has leased the Ladies' Literary club room and will open a dancing academy there.

Charles Warner, the English actor, is to star in this country next season, appearing first in his well-known character of Coupeau in "Drink." This is the part on which his reputation chiefly depends. His performance of it is said to be powerfully realistic, but it is rather an old story now.

David Belasco has announced the name of the new play in which Blanche Bates will star the season. It is "The Darling of the Gods," and is written by Belasco and John Luther Long. Belasco expects it to make as great a hit as the one-act "Madam Butterfly," in which Blanche Bates was so successful. Robert T. Haines will be leading man in the new play, and the veterans, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Walcott, will have good parts.

Miss Maude Adams's engagement in New York, which was to have been played at the Empire Theater, having bene postponed, her place will be taken by William Faversham, who will appear in the middle of November, under Charles Frohman's management. John Drew's engagement will continue until then. For Mr. Faversham Mr. Frohman has selected a new comedy by H. V. Esmond. It is in three acts and is a play of today. The manuscript has arrived, and rehearsals will begin at once.

MUSIC NOTES.

Marguerita Sylva was handsomely received in San Francisco in "The Strollers."

Sousa gives six concerts in San Francisco, but does not call at Salt Lake this year.

The Eugene Cowles Concert company gave its first performance of the season in Springfield with success.

James H. Love the well known Pacific coast manager died in San Francisco last week. Mr. Love was local manager of the Tabernacle choir on its first visit to San Francisco.

Director Stephens of the Tabernacle choir celebrated his twelfth anniversary as leader of that organization on Thursday. His friends all hope he may be waving the baton over the choir at the end of the next twelve years.

The First Regimental band under Prof. Christenson has been engaged for the coming week at the Boise state fair. Mrs. Rosemary G. Whitney will accompany the band as vocal soloist, and appear at a series of concerts in Boise during the week.

The Boston Handel and Hayden society announces the first American performance of Dubois's "Paradise Lost," on February 8. This work requires seven soloists, five of the parts being important. Schirmer is issuing an edition of the work, with English text, especially for this production.

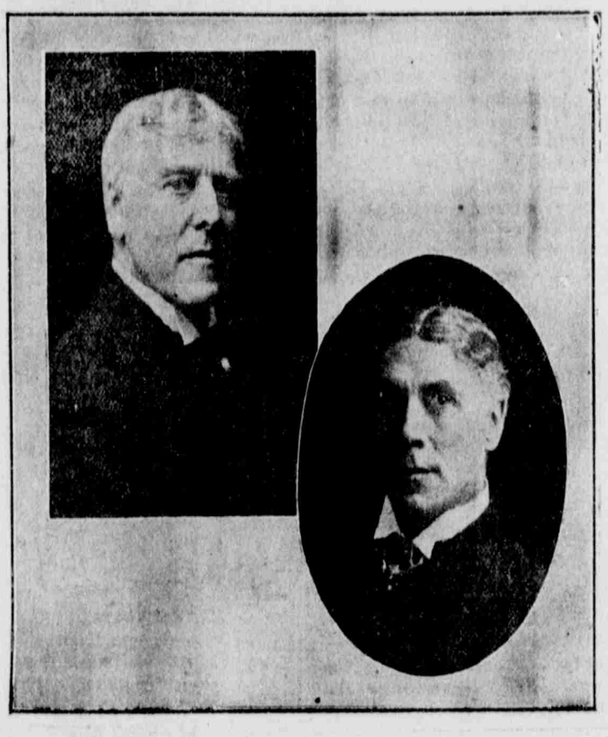
Misses Mabel Cooper, Ruth Wilson, Aura Rogers and the other ladies of the Corianton company who remained behind in Kansas City, have returned home. They stayed over to receive an offer made by them to form a chorus for Melbourne McDowell's performances in Kansas City, but the terms were not satisfactory, and the young ladies wisely decided to return home. The Johnson-Parr male quartet is still in Kansas City.

No other movement in musical circles has caused the comment occasioned by the success which seems to be attending the work of the Salt Lake Symphony orchestra, under Mr. Shepherd's direction. There are a number of people in Salt Lake who would like to hear something other than "rag time" music, and the work of the Salt Lake Symphony orchestra will no doubt lift the general taste to a higher class of music. We are all fond of popular music, rag time occasionally, but there are times when something better and more uplifting is required in our musical menu, and this seems to be a good time to change the diet. Success to Mr. Shepherd's new organization.

STODDART AS ACTOR, RACONTEUR, MANAGER, MAN

An acquaintance of 20 years or more with Mr. Stoddart, has made Salt Lake feel almost a proprietory interest in him, and everything that concerns him, whether as an actor, a writer of books—his reminiscences are being published by the Century company this month—or as an individual, is read with an affectionate regard that is very far from being mere curiosity.

An admirable article lately published in the San Francisco Examiner, gives so much information regarding the grand old actor's aims, his reminiscences and his views of the beautiful play he is now presenting in this city, that we reproduce it entire.



LOUIS JAMES AND FREDERICK WARDE.

"As I knocked at his door I did my best to clog my usually bounding spirits with a feeling of awe. "No matter how vigorous his acting, he is very old," said I to myself, "and I must be very careful, very tactful and reverent to the last degree." Indeed, I said more than that to my trustful young self: I said that I should humor him.

Oh, youth with its pouted chest and self-complacent goodness of heart! I can see legions of bright young men smugly humoring J. H. Stoddart—I do not think.

All my kindly prearrangements were squeezed away in the first grip of his hearty hand. That strong, splendidly ugly face glowed with his magnetism. I may say here as well as any other place that there is no disenchantment in a talk with "Old Man" Stoddart. He is as vivid, virile and strong off the stage as on. With him you need not affect a reverence for mere years which is not in your heart. He will meet you on your own youthful ground. Today is as real for him as it is for you. He is contemporary to the last minute, even though that minute be his seventy-fifth year. He is full of fine old yesterdays that trail back into the times of Forrest, Macready, Cushman, the elder Keane—but they are yesterdays, well remembered but not blotting out the present.

On the table that stood between our chairs were the newspapers of that morning containing the accounts of his first appearance in San Francisco as a star. A younger man in his debut season as a star would have hidden them—would perhaps have effected not to have read them. But this new star is different—superbly different. There is not an actorial pose in his whole manner. He had read the papers, had liked the notices. He said he liked them.

"They cheered me," he said. "We never get too old to like a kindly thing said of us—do we? Nor"—with a droll smile at me—"too young to like to hear that the kindly thing for the old gentleman has been well said?"

Can't you see me "humoring" Stoddart?

He smiled again when I asked him how it felt to be a star, and he referred me to Joseph Jefferson for expert testimony.

"Mr. Jefferson is my junior by six or eight months," he said, "but he has been doing this sort of thing nearly all his life. And his success has been wonderful. For years and years the critics have been after him for devoting his whole life to one part, but his Rip Van Winkle is more successful now than ever. I have started a few score years later in life to do something of the same sort; that is, to identify myself with a single role for a few seasons that are left before my retirement."

"Why did you wait so many years? Stars were springing up on all sides of you."

"Not until I was an old man," he corrected. "When I came to America from England in '54 to join the Wallack company our featured players—or stars, as they are now called—were such people as Forrest and Cushman and, later on, Edwin Booth. There was no royal road to the front. I played all kinds of parts then—and since. We were all except the very great ones, soldiers in the ranks, and soldier-like, a man rose according to his worth. It was a fine system; it made for ensemble and harmony; and even a player of no particular brilliance was taught at least the soldier-like repose that is invaluable to a career on the stage."

"And in contrasting the past and the present——?"

"You must remember that the conditions are altogether unlike. Maybe there is just as much ability today as yesterday; but everything is altered. There is no longer a school. The theater is now a purely commercial institution in which the manager finds it to his advantage to feature a great many players that in former days would hardly have been considered ripe to graduate from the ranks."

"In those days the tailor and the matinee girls were not such important factors in the making of stars."

"Nor was a liberal press," he supplemented, smiling from one side of his big, expressive mouth. "The actors that were featured and called great in those days were great. They have long since passed over the river, but their names are as familiar today as the names of the most successful moderns. And the companies, too, were great. Year after year we banded together in New York to play the works of Shakespeare and Sheridan, and out of that close association we grew to an understanding of one another. The performances sparkled: they were informed, charming. Verisimilitude and ensemble were words of full meaning."

"Yet even in those days, Mr. Stoddart, you must have had opportunities to 'go out on your own' and star."

"But I preferred the association and atmosphere of the big companies. It was always my ambition not to fall—well, we'll say, behind the times. So rather than be the prominent one in some provincial place, I preferred to stay among those people that stood for the truest and the best; doing my most for any part, big or little, that came my way."

"And now, in the absence of such good company, you've been driven to the center of the stage in a play written for that purpose?"

"No, no," he laughed; "I shouldn't put it that way. For 20 years I played with Palmer's companies and considered it an honor. The last time you saw me I was here with Henry Miller's company, and considered that an honor too. Miller is an actor-manager with the true spirit; he knows the value of harmonizing every part. No; I became the featured one of this company because Kirke La Shelle wanted me (the venture is his, not mine); because Dr. Watson was good enough to let James MacArthur dramatize 'The Bonnie Brier Bush' (and I assure you we had to promise a good job all hands round before we got the clergyman's consent) because the part of Lachlan Campbell made a strong appeal to me; and because, between you and me, I was tired of studying new parts, and fancied that in this one I could spend the balance of my working days. I've tackled everything from vaudeville to——"

"Tell me about the vaudeville," I interrupted.

"There's not much to tell. I jumped into it for a brief season about four years ago, when Barrymore and Rose Coghlan and a number of good people succumbed to the high sums offered. I played a condensed version of 'The Long Strike,' and liked it very well, all except the dancing bear."

"I don't remember a dancing bear in 'The Long Strike.'"

"No; he gave a little performance by himself at Keith's in Boston. In fact, I followed him in the bill, and every night of the engagement the stage manager used to knock on my door and shout, 'Now, Mr. Stoddart, your turn after the bear!'"

He chuckled at the recollection, and went on:

"Otherwise vaudeville at Keith's is not at all unpleasant; you are delightfully treated, and my engagement of five or six weeks was just short enough not to wear the novelty off the experience."

He chatted for an hour, and I am now culling from that conversation the comparatively few things he said about himself. He talked of actors, from Macready to Nat Goodwin. The latter he recognized as one of the foremost of the day. "Goodwin brims with magnetism," was one of his observations. He praised Jefferson for what would occupy a page. And he talked of writers, especially of William Winter, the dean of the dramatic critics, "a man that can be both poet and critic." He told me how, when those remarkable Stoddart reminiscences of the stage that appeared in the "Century" magazine some time ago were suggested to him, he asked Winter to write them.

"I offered Winter my notes and any further information I could give him," he said. "I told him I was not a literary man, and that the articles would look much better if written and signed by him, but he said, 'No, Stoddart; you do your own writing; just sit down and imagine you are writing a letter to a friend; commence with your first appearance in Glasgow at the age of five and talk on the way you have talked to me, and the people will read it.' So I did as Winter advised, and"—he paused an instant before continuing, with almost boy-like modesty—"the articles will come out in book form in a few months, and there's one part I'd like to have you read."

"You can't find a part, sir, I haven't read already," said I.

"Oh, yes, I can," said he, "the introduction by William Winter, in which he analyzes the old school and the modern way of doing things."

"Mr. Stoddart, if Winter puts you in the old school you ought to sue him for libel. All that that term, old school, means for the present generation is 'bad acting,' acting that is inhuman and defies credence. Might-have-beens like some I could name are apostles of the old school, and any man that puts you—as modern and straightaway and honest an artist as ever lived to be 75 years old to repudiate the 'actor-r-rs' that would make us believe Booth and his predecessors chewed soap and ate scenery—any man that puts the libelous label of 'old school' on you, sir, should be sued."

Stoddart was amused by my earnestness. "I'm sure," he said, through a good-natured smile, "Mr. Winter does not mean to do me an unkindness."

"Not intentionally, of course not; but I'm equally sure that you are one of the most modern of players; that your method is the method of today; sharp, concise, unaffected; and that for all your seventy-five years you would hate to be reckoned as six months behind the legitimate development of your art."

"Well, I have had to move on with the times," said he, more seriously. "I've had to tackle almost everything in the way of a part, and I've always tried to be natural. People sometimes say I'm not audible and emphatic enough in Lachlan Campbell's pathetic scenes—but I can't shout pathos; I simply can't do it. It isn't natural."

"But you are; so is your friend, Joseph Jefferson. That's why you and he can succeed today in plays whose value lies solely in their exploitations of your natural personalities."

"I've always been a believer in a personality, even when people have said, 'The only trouble with Old Man Stoddart is that he's always the same man,' because I've noticed that the great people never completely sank their personalities, no matter what the parts. Henry Irving has the same choppy manner of speech that marked Macready; Mansfield has something of the same. I'm not putting a premium on mannerisms, but on originality, out of which mannerisms possibly may spring. I had the pleasure of acting for two years with Edwin Booth, a great and very modest actor withal; and in all the variety of character that he portrayed there was in each one an unmistakable something of himself."

"That something is what marks the difference between mimicry and creativeness."

"Most assuredly. In even the minor detail of make-up I've held to my natural self as far as I consistently could. I remember how Dion Boucicault used to preach to me to metamorphose myself. My son, too, talked in the same strain when 'Alabama' was about to be played. I used to make up at home in those days; and on the opening night he insisted so strongly on a mustache for the old southerner that I put it on. Gus Thomas, who wrote the play, came into my dressing room before the curtain was raised and wanted to know what I was doing with all that fur on my upper lip. I told him I was only trying to metamorphose myself, and he said, 'Take it off. Why, God bless you, it's just your old face we want to see.' So I took it off. Thomas is a wonderfully persausive fellow, and wonderfully clever. It was he who put the final touches on 'The Bonnie Brier Bush' after we had tried out the first edition with indifferent success."

"The play may have its faults," said I, "but certainly the modern drama has given you no other part so thoroughly characteristic of your best work."

"I like the part of Lachlan Campbell and it seems to like me a bit," said he, with a twinkle. "It has been given out as my last part, and if the play lasts the season or two that is left of my stage life it shall be the last."

"And if it should not last?"

The twinkle died out of his eye, and I was sorry I had asked.

"Then I must find me another—although it will be hard work finding and harder work learning it," he said quietly. "Like most actors, I ought to be, but am not in the best of financial condition. I had saved a decent competency—I was always liberally paid as a stock actor—but I did what many another actor has done, speculated in things of which I knew nothing, and—"

He broke off abruptly, and bracing himself and me with a smile, went on, cheerfully:

"But I have every confidence in the piece. It will last long enough. They say that that big situation is 'Hazel Kirke' over again, that this is not the first daughter to be driven out into the night—but what of that? The heart interest of that situation is eternal. Good poetry loses none of its charm through being old."

"Nor a good actor his power to please."

"You are kind to say it. England has always been loyal to her old players. I've seen Helen Faucet and Mrs Keely play the youngest parts long after they were—shall I say a bit passe? I've seen Charles Matthews at seventy playing Dazzle, the role that he created in 'London Assurance.' In England there is an old saying, 'Once a favorite always a favorite,' but in the United States, where I have spent the greater part of my life, the cry is for beauty to depict beauty, and youth to depict youth. I suppose the English are sentimental and the Americans are sensible."

He mused a moment and then said, half to himself.

"Did you ever hear Mario sing?"

I did not answer. I was trying to recall those lines by Owen Meredith.

"Mario sang as no other man ever sang," mused Stoddard; "and acted—I shall never forget his death scene in 'Lucia,' fifty—how many years ago?—I was a young man then and he was in his prime. I never heard him after that, but when I was old and he was older, and I was off in Springfield with a company that was doing very badly—that must have been in the earlier seventies—the manager said to me one night, 'Our house isn't much, but you ought to see the tenor's; not enough money at the concert to pay for the lights.' The tenor was Mario."

I had the stanza now, from Aux Italiens, and I gave it to Stoddart:

Of all the operas that Verdi wrote
The best, to my taste, is the "Trovatore:"
And Mario can soothe with a tenor note
The souls in purgatory.

"My dear boy, if you had heard Mario you would know all that those lines mean, and all that it meant to me to know that he, who had had the world at his feet, was little better off that a beggar. But perhaps he could no longer sing; perhaps sense after all was better than sentiment. Surely no man would like to feel that he is only a pensioner on public favor. In this country he would rather earn; he must earn."

At the door I said: "I hope that the 'Bonnie Brier Bush' lasts and that your farewells may be as numerous and as profitable as Adelina Patti's," and "Old Man" Stoddart smiled.

They don't make finer actors, they don't make finer gentlemen, than "Old Man" Stoddart.